

# THE EXPRESS

205 West Morgan Street • Wadesboro, NC 28170 • 704-694-2480 • [TheExpressNews@gmail.com](mailto:TheExpressNews@gmail.com) • [www.TheExpressNewspaper.com](http://www.TheExpressNewspaper.com)

Serving Anson County and the Municipalities of Ansonville, Lilesville, McFarlan, Morven, Peachland, Polkton and Wadesboro.

## Dolly Day Brings Books, Coffee and a Little Sparkle to Wadesboro

Friday event to support Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library and literacy efforts in Anson County

Something special - and just a little bit sparkle - is coming to Wadesboro this Friday, September 25, as Dolly Day celebrates Dolly Parton while supporting children’s literacy in Anson County. The event will be held from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Jubilee Coffee Lounge & Emporium, located at 122-A West Wade Street in Wadesboro.

Dolly Day will support Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library and literacy efforts in Anson County, bringing together two things that are pretty hard to argue with: good books and Dolly Parton. Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is known for helping put books into the hands of young children, encouraging families to read together and helping youngsters develop a love of reading early in life. The local effort is supported by the Anson County Partnership for Children.

One of Dolly’s reminders about the importance of reading: “You can never get enough books into the hands of children.” Residents are invited to stop by Jubilee during Dolly Day, enjoy the celebration and help support an effort aimed at giving Anson children a strong start through books and literacy.

And considering the guest of honor is Dolly Parton, a little extra hair, a little extra sparkle and a whole lot of enthusiasm probably won’t be out of place.

## Major Changes Coming to NC Medicaid in 2026 and 2027

North Carolinians who receive Medicaid are being urged to pay close attention to several significant changes taking effect beginning this fall and in 2027. The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services says some beneficiaries may need to take action to keep their coverage.

The changes particularly affect adults ages 19 through 64, some people who are not U.S. citizens, and people applying or reapplying for Medicaid. NCDHHS says people whose circumstances do not fall into those categories will not be affected by the new rules as long as they continue to meet Medicaid eligibility requirements.

One of the biggest changes begins January 1, 2027, when certain Medicaid beneficiaries ages 19 through 64 will be required to work, attend school or volunteer for at least 80 hours per month. The requirement can also be met if a beneficiary’s household earns at least \$580 per month. Beneficiaries will be required to provide proof of hours worked and money earned.

Exemptions: NCDHHS says people with a disability, parents of children under age 14, pregnant women and some others will not have to meet the work requirement.

Another important change for affected adults is more frequent Medicaid renewals. Instead of renewing coverage once a year, beneficiaries subject to the new rule will have to renew every six months. Medicaid will send a notice if the recipient needs to take action to complete the renewal.

Changes for many Medicaid beneficiaries who are not U.S. citizens begin October 1, 2026. According to NCDHHS, many noncitizens will lose Medicaid coverage under the new rules, although several groups may remain eligible. Those include lawful permanent residents, commonly called green card holders, although most must satisfy a five-year waiting period; lawfully residing children through age 19; lawfully residing women who are pregnant or gave birth during the previous 12 months; people with Cuban or Haitian entrant status; and citizens of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands or Palau who live in the United States.

Changes are also coming for people applying or reapplying for Medicaid. Medicaid currently can provide eligible applicants with coverage for certain medical expenses incurred before their application was submitted. Beginning January 1, 2027, that retroactive coverage period will become shorter.

For most adults ages 19 through 64 who do not have a disability, Medicaid will cover eligible health care expenses incurred up to one month before the application date. Children, adults age 65 and older and people with a disability may receive coverage for eligible expenses incurred up to two months before applying. Those who apply by December 31, 2026 may still receive approved retroactive coverage for up to three months.

NCDHHS is encouraging everyone who currently receives NC Medicaid to make sure their local Department of Social Services has their correct address and telephone number. Beneficiaries should open and respond promptly to letters from DSS because those notices often contain deadlines. Missing a deadline is a common reason people lose Medicaid coverage.

Beneficiaries are also encouraged to obtain an enhanced ePASS account, which allows them to upload documents that may be required to maintain coverage. Information is available at: [epass.nc.gov](http://epass.nc.gov).

Anyone who loses Medicaid will receive a letter explaining the reason and how to appeal the decision. NCDHHS says beneficiaries generally have 60 days from the date of the letter to appeal. Free assistance with a Medicaid notice or bill is available through the NC Medicaid Ombudsman at 1-877-201-3750.

The NC Medicaid Contact Center can also be reached at 888-245-0179, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., except state holidays.

More detailed information about the upcoming changes, including information about who is exempt from the new requirements, is available at: [medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/beneficiaries/medicaid-is-changing](http://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/beneficiaries/medicaid-is-changing).

## Candy Crawl Returns for Halloween Fun

Ghosts, goblins, superheroes, princesses and probably more than a few dinosaurs will take over Wadesboro when the Wadesboro Candy Crawl returns on Saturday, October 31.

The Halloween fun will take place in uptown Wadesboro from 5 to 7:30 p.m., giving youngsters and their families an opportunity to make their way through town in search of treats - and perhaps enough candy to last until Thanksgiving.

Businesses and organizations that would like to participate in the Candy Crawl and be included on the map published in The Express Newspaper are encouraged to sign up now.

To be included on the map, contact Elizabeth Rizzo by Monday, October 19, at 704-694-4036 or email her at: [elizabeth.rizzo@ansonchildren.org](mailto:elizabeth.rizzo@ansonchildren.org).



Pictured above, from left, are Tega, Jody, Matthew and Caitlin Taylor

## TaylorBoys Outdoors Named 2026 Anson County Farm of the Year

What began with a father who wanted to keep honey bees has grown into an agricultural operation managing about 100 colonies and producing approximately 4,000 pounds of honey - and now TaylorBoys Outdoors has been named the 2026 Anson County Extension Farm of the Year.

The family of Jody and Tega Taylor was recognized recently at the Anson County Farm-City Week Banquet. For the Taylors, the award carries special meaning because of their family’s agricultural background and the father who helped spark Jody’s fascination with bees.

TaylorBoys Outdoors, based in Lilesville, operates five bee yards in Anson and Richmond counties. Jody describes the operation as a “sideline” - larger than a hobby operation but not a full commercial beekeeping business. The family produces honey, raises queens occasionally and sells nucs, or nucleus colonies, to people starting or expanding their own hives.

A nuc is essentially a small, functioning honey bee colony. Jody explained that it includes a queen, pollen, honey, eggs, larvae, pupae and adult bees - the ingredients needed for the bees to establish and grow a colony of their own.

Jody’s path into beekeeping began with his father, Coy Taylor, who desperately wanted bees at his home even as his eyesight was failing. Coy would purchase a nucleus colony, but the bees repeatedly failed to survive the winter. After three years, Jody decided to join his father and learn more about keeping the bees alive.

“So I told my daddy, I’m gonna get in here with you and try to learn a little bit about the honeybees,” Jody recalled. “So that is how I got addicted to honey bees.”

That father-and-son experience also provided the name TaylorBoys Outdoors Apiary. Their original goal was straightforward: learn enough about honey bees to keep the colonies alive. The operation began with just a few colonies. Through splitting colonies and natural swarming, the number grew to four overwintered colonies and then 18 the following year. From there, as Jody put it, “the rest is history.”

The Taylors originally wanted bees primarily for pollination, since the family enjoys growing flowers and vegetables. As their knowledge and experience increased, so did the apiary. Today, spring honey production is a family affair. Jody adds boxes called “supers” to the colonies during nectar flow, giving the bees space to store honey. When the honey is ready, sons Matthew and Hunter Taylor pitch in with extracting and handling it.

And 4,000 pounds of honey means quite a few buckets. “There’s a lot of work and a lot of lifting and a lot to do during the spring of the year,” Jody said. The Taylors also receive help from other family members and their church family.

The operation has grown carefully over time. Jody said beekeeping requires considerable equipment and can become expensive, so sales of nucs in the spring and honey throughout the year have helped the apiary pay for its own growth.

The Taylors are also active in sharing what they have learned. They work with Anson County 4-H, visit schools and daycares and have given programs for Leadership Anson and the Anson Women’s League. They are active with the Anson County Beekeepers Association, where Jody previously served as president and now serves as program director.

“We really like to teach people about bees,” Tega said. “We love to teach children.”

Jody said the local Beekeepers Association welcomes newcomers interested in learning both the rewards and challenges of keeping honey bees. Modern honey bees face numerous difficulties, he said, making education important for the public as well as current and future beekeepers.

TaylorBoys Outdoors also shares its day-to-day beekeeping operation through Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Its honey is sold at a number of locations throughout the region, including several stores in Anson County.

For Jody and Tega, however, being selected Farm of the Year brings the story back to family. “Becoming 2026 Farm of the Year in Anson County has been quite an honor to us,” Jody said. “It means even more and we’re mighty thankful to be chosen.”

And he believes the man who started it all would be pleased. “I know my daddy is smiling in heaven right now,” Jody said. “Coy Taylor would be tickled.”

TaylorBoys Outdoors videos are available on YouTube, just search “Taylorboys Outdoors.”

## Anson Schools Among Just Five Statewide to Receive Innovation Grant

Funding will help educators expand digital teaching and create new learning opportunities for students

Anson County Schools is one of only five public school units in North Carolina selected to receive a 2026-27 Instructional Innovation Grant, putting the local school system in a small group recognized for innovative approaches to digital teaching and learning.

The State Board of Education awarded a combined \$217,425 to the five recipients through the competitive Instructional Innovation Grant program. In addition to Anson County Schools, recipients are Asheville City Schools, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools, Johnston County Public Schools and Research Triangle High School.

The one-year grants support high-quality professional learning and the purposeful use of innovative instructional technologies. For Anson County Schools, the investment means additional opportunities for educators to innovate and grow while giving students more opportunities to engage, create, collaborate, think critically and apply what they learn in meaningful ways.

“The goal of the program is to identify, elevate and share effective models of instructional innovation that demonstrate digital leadership, strengthen educator practice and improve student learning,” said Dr. Vanessa Wren, chief information officer for the N.C. Department of Public Instruction.

Anson County Schools said the grant directly supports two priorities in the district’s Strategic Plan: Priority 1, Student Learning & Success, and Priority 2, Human Resources & Quality Staff.

The district emphasized that investing in the learning and leadership capacity of its staff strengthens the quality of learning experiences offered to students and helps prepare every student to thrive in school, career and life.

Each of the funded projects aligns with the NC Digital Learning Plan and digital learning competencies established by the International Society for Technology in Education. The projects are intended to strengthen educator skills while creating opportunities for students to develop greater independence, engagement, critical thinking, collaboration and creativity.

Statewide, 17 public school districts and charter schools will receive more than \$1.2 million in Digital Learning Initiative grants during the 2026-27 school year. Twelve school units will receive more than \$1 million in continuing funding for previously awarded multi-year Digital Learning Impact grants.

The state’s Digital Learning Initiative Grant Program dates to 2016 and was established as part of a collaboration between the State Board of Education and the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at N.C. State University.

For Anson County Schools, however, the statewide numbers come down to an impressive local distinction: one of only five school systems and charter schools in North Carolina chosen for a new Instructional Innovation Grant this year. The Anson County Schools Strategic Plan is available at: [linktr.ee/ansoncountyschools](http://linktr.ee/ansoncountyschools).

## Child Food Insecurity in NC Reaches Highest Level in Nearly a Decade

More than one in five children live in households without steady access to food

More North Carolina children are struggling to get enough to eat, with new data showing child food insecurity at its highest level in almost a decade, according to NC Child’s 2026 County Data Cards.

The annual County Data Cards track 15 measures of child health and well-being in each of North Carolina’s 100 counties. The latest figures show that 504,790 children - 21.5 percent of the state’s children - live in households without consistent access to adequate food.

That represents a substantial increase in just one year. In 2023, more than 438,200 children, or 18.9 percent, lived in food-insecure households. The 2024 figures, the most recent available from Feeding America, indicate that almost 66,600 additional North Carolina children lost regular access to adequate nutrition.

“Every child deserves to go to sleep at night without wondering where their next meal is coming from - but right now, more than 1 in 5 North Carolina children are going to bed hungry. We have to change this,” said NC Child Executive Director Erica Palmer Smith.

NC Child Senior Director of Policy and Research Neil Harrington said the increase comes despite a modest rise in median family income. He pointed to the rising cost of goods and the increasing expense of raising a family as challenges contributing to food insecurity.

Advocates are also concerned that child food insecurity could continue to increase following changes to federal food assistance enacted through H.R. 1. Harrington said changes involving SNAP administrative costs, payment error rates and work requirements could make the program more difficult for counties to administer and harder for families to access, with rural counties potentially affected disproportionately.

Smith said adequate nutrition affects much more than a child’s physical health. Reliable access to healthy food can also have a significant effect on a child’s ability to learn and succeed in school.

The 2026 County Data Cards also include new information about children’s mental health, including county-level rates of pediatric behavioral health visits to emergency departments. NC Child noted that more children are being diagnosed with anxiety or depression and that nearly one in 10 North Carolina high school students reported making a suicide attempt.

Another new measure tracks the percentage of children under age 6 with working parents who are enrolled in licensed child care programs. Harrington said tracking the figure will help communities understand how investments in early childhood education affect access to child care, family financial security and workforce participation.

NC Child publishes its County Data Cards annually to provide community leaders, advocates and policymakers with benchmarks for evaluating the well-being of children throughout the state.

County-specific information, including the Data Card for Anson County, is available at [ncchild.org/datacards](http://ncchild.org/datacards). Additional child health and well-being information is available at [ncchild.org/data-center](http://ncchild.org/data-center).